

ACHS SUMMARY FORM

M:29-30
(date entered 5-12-80)

1. Name: Great Falls Tavern/Crommelin House
2. Planning Area/Site Number: 29/30 3. M-NCPPC Atlas Reference: Map 19
Coordinate E-9
4. Address: 11710 MacArthur Blvd
Potomac, Md.
5. Classification Summary
- | | |
|---|--|
| Category <u>building</u> | Previous Survey Recording <u>MNCPPC</u> |
| Ownership <u>public</u> | Title and Date: <u>Historic Sites Inventory</u> |
| Public Acquisition <u>N/A</u> | 1976 |
| Status <u>occupied</u> | |
| Accessible <u>yes</u> | Federal <u> </u> State <u>x</u> County <u>x</u> Local <u> </u> |
| Present use <u>educational, government,</u> | |
| <u>museum, park</u> | |
6. Date: 1829-32 7. Original Owner: C & O Canal Company
8. Apparent Condition
- a. excellent b. altered c. original site
9. Description: This five bay by seven bay, T-shaped house now faces northeast. The original three bay, one and a half story stone lock house faced south-east and was built in 1829. In 1830 a 2½ story inn was added to the north-east elevation; in 1831 a southwest innkeeper's quarters were erected at the same time the lock house was raised to be in keeping with the larger scale of the later additions. The southwest ell is flanked on the southeast and northwest by porches. The southeast porch is two stories and has an outside stairway connecting the two. There is a two story southwest porch. The tavern has intersecting gable roofs. On the northeast elevation two interior end chimneys are connected, giving that gable end its distinctive appearance.
10. Significance: Great Falls Tavern probably is the outstanding habitable building on the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal and the only inn to be built by the canal company along the 185-mile length of the canal.
- In 1828 the C & O Canal Company let a contract to build a stone lock-house at lock 20, four years later granting the lock keeper the right to operate a tavern. Additions were made, shutters added and the building painted white. The company named it Crommelin House. It was used as an hotel/tavern/lock keeper's house until 1848 when it became just a home for the lock keeper. In 1851 part of it was rented for a grocery. In 1858 it was again used as a hotel. From 1913-1925 it was leased to a private club, and abandoned in 1924. The B & O Railroad acquired the land. The present owners acquired it in 1938. It was leased occasionally for use as a refreshment stand until 1948 when restoration began. The present museum dates from 1970.
- Candy Reed - Arch. Description
11. Researcher and date researched: David M. Kiefer August 1979
12. Compiler: Margaret Coleman 13. Date Compiled: Sept. 1979 14. Designation Approval
15. Acreage: ½ acre

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Great Falls Tavern

AND/OR COMMON

Crommelin House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

11710 MacArthur Blvd.

CITY, TOWN

Potomac

~~X~~ VICINITY OF Great Falls

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC
☐ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☒ MUSEUM
☐ COMMERCIAL ☒ PARK
☒ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☒ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

National Park Service

Telephone #: 299-3613

STREET & NUMBER

U.S. Department of the Interior

CITY, TOWN

Washington

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

D.C.

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Montgomery County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Liber #: 638

Folio #: 76

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

MNCPPC Inventory of Historical Sites

DATE

1976

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☒ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Park Historian's Office

CITY, TOWN

Derwood

STATE

Maryland 20855

7 DESCRIPTION

M:29-30

CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This five bay by seven bay, T-shaped building sits close to the C & O Canal. Great Falls Tavern, which is used at present by the National Park Service as headquarters and visitors' center for the lower section of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, consists of three sections.

Built on fieldstone foundations, the original stone lock house was a three bay, one and a half story structure which faced southeast. In 1830 the Canal Company added a brick, five bay by two bay, two-and-a-half story inn northeast of the lockhouse; the inn faces northeast. In 1830-31 a two bay, two story, southwest addition was erected to provide quarters for the innkeeper. At the time of the final addition the roof of the lock house was raised to conform to the larger proportions of the later additions. The tavern is painted white.

The southwest ell is flanked on the southeast and northwest elevations by porches. The southeast porch is two stories and is covered by the gable roof of the ell. The porch is enclosed at the second level by a balustraded railing. There are two chamfered wooden posts at the first and second levels. A single run, closed string, wooden staircase ascend from northeast to southwest along the southeast wall. There is a vertical wooden paneled door with strap hinges at the first and second levels. There is a wooden paneled door which faces northeast and a second vertical wooden paneled door facing southeast under the stairs. There is a two story southwest porch which is enclosed at the second level by four chamfered wooden posts and a balustraded railing. At the first level there are four chamfered wooden posts. There is a wooden paneled door at the first and second levels of the southwest elevation. On the northwest elevation there is a shed roof porch supported by four wooden chamfered posts. There is a vertical wooden paneled northwest door and a wooden paneled door that faces southwest (from the northeast section) onto the northwest porch.

There are nine-over-six and six-over-six double-hung windows throughout the tavern, flanked by green wooden louvered shutters. On the northeast elevation, second level, there is a three part window composed of a central six-over-six double-hung window, flanked by two-over-two double-hung windows. Above this is a semi-circular window divided into four-light quarters. There is a gabled louvered ventilator dormer window on the southeast elevation. There are two gabled louvered ventilator dormer windows on the northwest elevation.

The house has a gable roof with wooden shingles. The northeast section has a corbelled cornice line. There are two connected interior northeast gable end chimneys. There is one interior southwest gable end chimney (in the northeast section). There is one interior chimney at the southwest end of the original lock house. There is an exterior chimney on the southeast elevation.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

(continued on Attachment Sheet A)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

M:29-30

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES

1829-32

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Great Falls Tavern probably is the outstanding habitable building on the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal and the only inn to be built by the canal company along the 185-mile length of the canal.

A contract to build a stone lockhouse (Lock House 12) at lock 20, at a cost of \$700, was let by the C & O Canal Co. in December 1828. During the course of construction, in the summer of 1830, an enlargement of this original section was undertaken, at a cost of an additional \$1300. In November 1830, W.W. Fenlon, who was lock keeper for locks 19 and 20, was granted by the canal company the right to operate a tavern at Great Falls. The tavern was established by June 1831. At this time, too, a porch was built on the western front of the stone central section, the second story of this section was completed, and the exterior walls of the wings were stuccoed or plastered. Work on the building appears to have been completed by the winter of 1831-32. The canal company named it Crommelin House, in honor of an Amsterdam family that had assisted in obtaining loans to build the canal. Shutters were added and the building painted in 1832.

During the second and third quarters of the 19th century, the building served as a hotel/tavern and as a lock keeper's house, and sometimes as both. In 1848, however, the canal company banned the sale of liquor on its property, so that the building was only used to house the lock keeper. In 1851, the tavern ballroom was rented for use as a grocery. Construction of the Washington Aqueduct from above Great Falls to the District of Columbia began in 1853, with the aqueduct tunnel passing just north and east of the building. During this construction, the building was considerably damaged. In 1858, the building was again rented as a hotel "for the accommodation of visitors to the Great Falls" under the management of lock keeper Henry Busey. Howard A. Garrett leased the tavern in 1876 and operated it into the 1880s in conjunction with his nearby feed store, which was razed about 1910. This period was the canal's heyday, and Garrett built several frame dwellings and other structures near the tavern. Great Falls gained great popularity as a party and picnic site, and a streetcar line served the area.

The building continued to be used as a hotel until about 1900, then contained a grocery until 1913. From 1913 to 1925, the canal company leased it to a private club. The canal was abandoned in 1924 and its land acquired by the B & O Railroad. During the following decade and a half

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

(continued on Attachment Sheet B)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Unpublished NPS historical research report, Rodger Young, 1939
Washington Star, Nov. 8, 1946.

Roger Brooke Farquhar, "Old Houses and History of Montgomery County, Maryland," Silver Spring, Md. 1962. p. 167

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY $\frac{1}{2}$ acre

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

David M. Kiefer

Candy Reed/arch. description

ORGANIZATION

Sugarloaf Regional Trails

DATE

August 8, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

Box 87

TELEPHONE

926-4510

CITY OR TOWN

Dickerson

STATE

Maryland 20753

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
 The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
 (301) 267-1438

The only basement is under the south wing.

Except for the porches, the exterior of the building is essentially unchanged since it was completed shortly after 1830. The porches were added at various times. The eastern porch dates from the Civil War and perhaps before. The southern porch was in place at least by about 1890 and also may be from the Civil War period. The western porch of 1831 was extended to its present length after 1889. In 1929, another porch was added on the north side of the north wing; it was removed sometime after 1940.

A frame kitchen was attached to the east side of the south wing about 1876. It was replaced with a second frame kitchen in 1926, which was removed about 1945.

The tavern has been converted into a Park Service office and museum. The northeast section is a single, large room, used as a museum. The original lock house is the hospitality center and the southwest innkeepers quarters are now used as an audi-visual room.

The northeast section has a brick floor. The southwest ell has random-width flooring. The walls are plaster over lath and the ceiling is stuccoed. There are wooden paneled doors with iron box locks and brass knobs. There are deep window reveals.

The interior has been extensively changed since the building was built. The central stone section originally served as a lock keeper's quarters and contained on the ground floor several small rooms. The south wing was the inn-keeper's residence, with a parlor on the first floor and a kitchen originally in the basement. The north wing served as the tavern, with a bar room on the west side of the ground floor and a larger "ballroom" on the east side, entrance to which was through the large door, with a handsome fan-light, that is still present. The second and third floors of the tavern wing were divided into hotel rooms (the third floor was known as "the honeymoon suite").

the building was leased as a tavern and residence by William H. Case. It was acquired by the National Park Service in 1938.

By 1939, the south wing was serving merely as a refreshment stand, "opening up on weekends to sell a few hot dogs and cokes", according to a contemporary newspaper story. The building was leased by the Government for use as a refreshment stand and boat concession from 1941 to 1946. By 1946, the building was in such poor condition, with sagging floors and a rotten and leaking roof and only the masonry and brick walls intact, that plans were considered to demolish it. Instead, however, it was decided to restore it for use as an interpretive center and museum. Restoration was started in 1948 and completed in 1951. The present museum dates from 1970.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

NOMINATION FORM

for the

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

1. NAME					
COMMON: Great Falls Park, C & O Canal					
AND/OR HISTORIC: Great Falls of the Potomac					
2. LOCATION					
STREET AND NUMBER: MacArthur Boulevard					
CITY OR TOWN: Potomac					
STATE: Maryland			COUNTY: Montgomery		
3. CLASSIFICATION					
CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment		<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____					
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY					
OWNER'S NAME: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
CITY OR TOWN: Washington, DC			STATE:		
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION					
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Montgomery County Courthouse					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
CITY OR TOWN: Rockville			STATE: Maryland		
Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #):					
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS					
TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey					
DATE OF SURVEY: 1936 <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local					
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress					
STREET AND NUMBER: 10 First Street SE					
CITY OR TOWN: Washington, DC			STATE:		

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The area has a number of separate buildings of interest.

Great Falls Tavern (1828-31) is a Federal Style building.

There are several locks on the Canal around the falls.

In the 1850's, a weir was constructed across the Potomac and a pumping station built to supply water to Washington, DC. A mansard-roofed, stone Control Gatehouse was erected in 1853-8. A house in a similar style sits on a hill above the Gatehouse.

The buildings have been recorded by HABS and are listed on the National Register and are National Landmark structures.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | losophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

Acreage Justification:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Christopher Owens, Sr. Park Historian

ORGANIZATION

MNCPPC

DATE

5 Mar 75

STREET AND NUMBER:

8787 Georgia Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:

Silver Spring

STATE

Maryland

12.

State Liaison Officer Review: (Office Use Only)

Significance of this property is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Signature

are four rooms on the first floor, including the old slave kitchen which has a seven-foot high fireplace with the crane still in place, and an old bake oven on the left side. Each of the other rooms on the first floor has a fireplace. The second floor has four rooms and four fireplaces, and there is a cellar under the whole house with another large slave kitchen-type fireplace, making nine fireplaces in all.

In the main or living room on the first floor there is a very fine large carved mantel with corner cupboards on each side and a display of some fine paneling. A number of "HH" and "HL" hinges are to be seen, and the huge strap hinges, barn-door type, are on the two

outside doors, the latter being as long as the doors are wide.

Early in the nineteenth century the house, with a large acreage, was sold in accordance with instructions in the will of Joseph Newton Chiswell, Jr., who had inherited it from his father. Before the Civil War it belonged to a family named Matthews, after which for a number of years it was owned by Dr. Thomas E. Johnson, a prominent physician of Frederick. From his estate in 1929, the house with 130 acres of land, was purchased by Mrs. Beryl E. Gray, who still owns the property, and operates thereon a successful dairy.

Great Falls Tavern

FOR well over a century the quaint brick and stone building shown here has endured as a picturesque Montgomery County landmark along the edge of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. In 1830 it was occupied as a home by W. W. Fenlon, lock keeper, who was "granted the privilege of maintaining a tavern in the structure at Great Falls." Since that time, "the structure has experienced a long and colorful career as a lock keeper's house, tavern and hotel, private club, house, and general concession center for recreation seekers at the Great Falls."¹

Following the great canal-building era, in the 1820's and 1830's, when 4000 miles of canals were begun or planned, the C. & O. came into this picture when John Quincy Adams on July 4, 1828, turned the first shovelful of earth near Little Falls. "Navigation was begun as divisions were completed, first from Georgetown to Seneca (1831), then to Harpers Ferry (1833), to near Hancock, Maryland (1839), and finally to Cumberland in 1850."² This important means of transportation from the tidewater area of Maryland to the Allegany Mountains, by constantly improving modes of communication, became obsolete in an era of railroad and motor

high speed travel, and was abandoned in 1924. In 1938 the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was purchased by the Federal Government and became a part of the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior.

As early as 1754 George Washington contemplated river and canal transportation along the Potomac. Through his initiative the Potomac Company was organized, and by 1802 the canals planned by that company were substantially completed. Upon reaching the Little Falls, on the Virginia side of the river, a remarkable series of five locks lifted the boats a total height of seventy-six feet. Four other short canals were built on the Virginia side of the river, and



NO. 126 H-6 CANAL COMPANY STONE 1828-'30

¹ "The Great Falls Tavern, Montgomery County Maryland." By Roger W. Young, Assistant Research Technician, June, 1939.

² National Capital Parks, Bulletin. Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.

two others around falls were on the Maryland side. The failure of the Potomac Company to provide transportation considered adequate resulted in the promotion of the Chesapeake and Ohio as its successor.

The old tavern at Great Falls begun in December, 1828, near Lock No. 20 was designated as Lock House No. 12, and authority was given in July 1830 to enlarge the original structure. By this authorization a considerable addition was planned providing for the expenditure of \$1,300 whereas the original allotment was only \$700. The original part was part of the rear or south wing, immediately adjoining the large north wing. It appears evident that both the northern and southern wings, or possibly both, were undertaken in 1830. The Little Falls to Seneca section had just been opened; business began to look encouraging; and W. W. Fenlon was installed as keeper of Locks 19 and 20 in November, 1830. He was granted the privilege of maintaining a tavern in the building, apparently in the original structure with the additions being then completed. On November 20, an appropriation of \$200 was granted to construct a kitchen. The gross amount allotted by this time to the tavern with improvements was \$2,100. By 1831 the building was considered an "established tavern."

In June, 1831, Colonel John J. Abert, United States Topographical Engineer (see *Homewood*), stated in a report, "at Lock 20, we found an excellent hotel kept by Mr. Fenlon."

By an authorization in June, 1831, for a considerable sum for plastering with a composition of sand, common lime, and cement, it appears evident that both the existing brick northern and southern wings were partly finished by that date. This authorization referred to a porch in front of the "stone center of the house." This original stone center of the house was only a story-and-a-half building, as it still appears. It is believed the plastering of the exterior walls was completed in the fall of 1831.

In August, 1848, the Canal Company ruled that the lock keeper could sell no intoxicating liquor at the tavern, which was then commonly known as the "Cromelin House." This ruling continued in effect until after the War between the States. In 1849 the company decided "that the building be no longer rented, but the same shall be used and considered as a lockhouse."

In 1851 the company allowed the "Ballroom" to be used as a grocery store. In January, 1858, the company again allowed the re-establishment of a hotel or "ordinary," at the "Cromelin House," and gave Henry Busey keeper of Locks 19 and 20 permission to open one there "for the accommodation of visitors to the Great Falls."

From 1859 until 1872 G. W. Case was lock and tavern keeper during which time cooking was evidently done in the basement under the southern or right wing. Periodic floods interfered with use of the basement for the purpose, but in January, 1868, I. R. Maus (see *Mt. Radnor*), Superintendent of the Georgetown Division, reported that "the basement can be put in good condition for a kitchen—as they have no other place for cooking, but in the room usually occupied as a parlor."

The porches were constructed at various times. Howard A. Garrett was for years identified with the business interests at Great Falls. He probably occupied the tavern for hotel purposes in 1875, leased the structure in 1876, and operated it in conjunction with a store until early in the 1880s.

During the 1890s the author recalls vividly a visit to Great Falls by a thrilling method of transportation. A party of a dozen or so left Sandy Spring early one spring morning in a four-horse tally-ho, with half of the party inside, and the others seated on the top of the coach. The driver with four lines in his hand must be skilled at tooling such a conveyance as the lead horses were especially fast and snappy.

Since the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal was acquired by the Federal Government in 1938, and turned over to the Interior Department for administration and development as a recreation area, a number of plans have been under consideration by Congress to change the property into a high-speed boulevard. The restoration of service of the canal boats pulled by mules between Georgetown and Woodmont for pleasure parties has been one popular feature. The National Capital Park officials have completely restored and beautified the old tavern building and in 1950 and 1951 have opened part of the building as a museum, allotting two rooms to the Montgomery County Historical Society for use as a museum for the exhibition of antiques, colonial relics, implements and county archives.

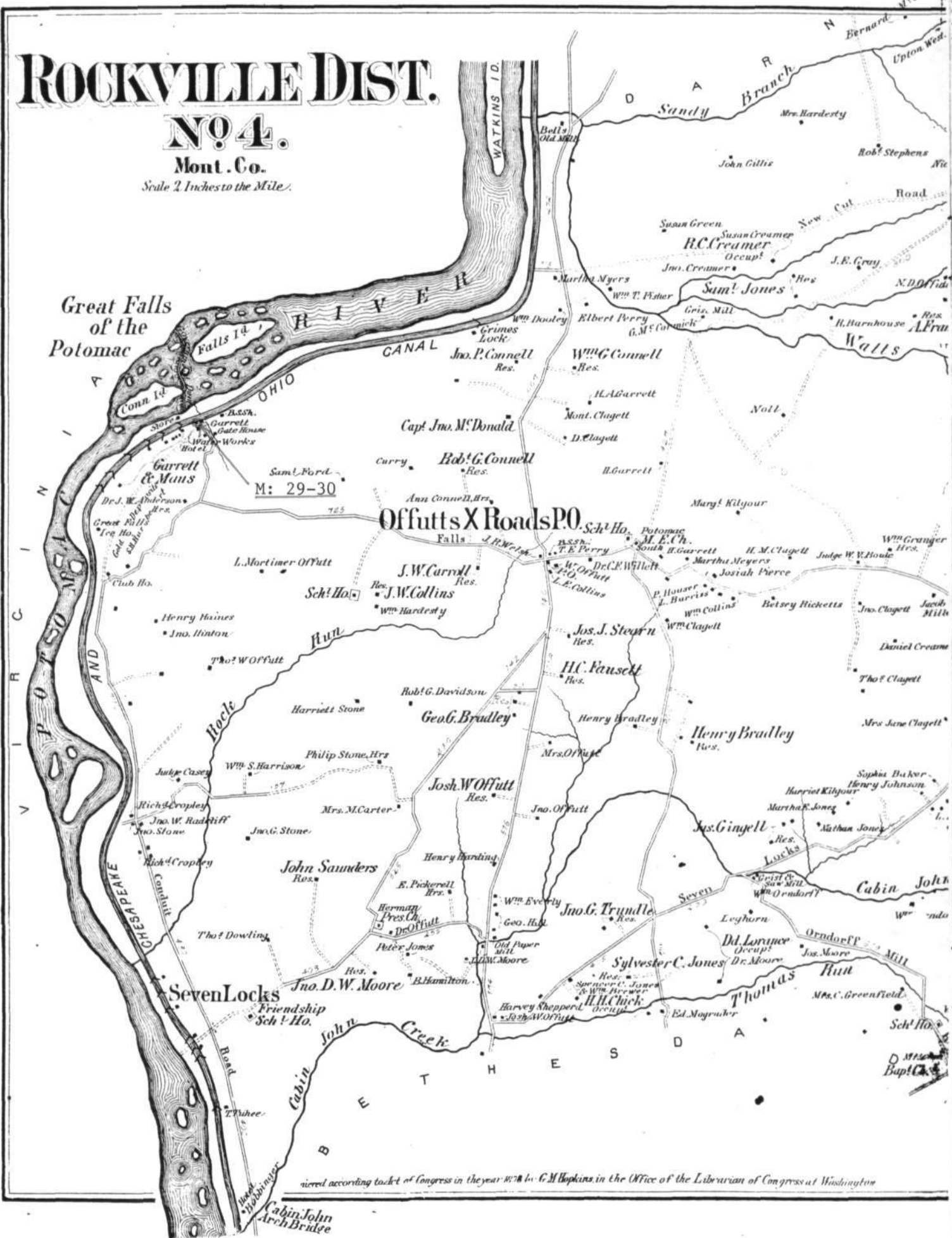
ROCKVILLE DIST.

Nº 4.

Mont. Co.

Scale 2 Inches to the Mile.

Great Falls
of the
Potomac



revised according to act of Congress in the year 1874 by G.M. Hopkins in the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington

430 000 FEET
(MD.)

39°00'
77°15'

730 000 FEET (MD.)
GLEN ECHO 7.8 MI.

M: 29-30
Great Falls Tavern (Cromwellin House)
Rockville Quad, 1956

GREAT FALLS 1.6 MI.

12°30''

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods
Aerial photographs taken 1955. Field check 1956

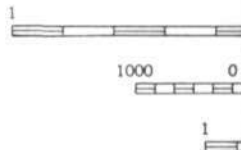
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on Maryland coordinate system,
and Virginia coordinate system, north zone
1,000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 18, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines
visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

Red tint indicates areas in which only

7°
TRUE NORTH
MAGNETIC NORTH

APPROXIMATE MEAN
DECLINATION, 1956



(VIENNA)

M: 29-30

Great Falls Tavern (Crommelin House)

11710 MacArthur Boulevard, Potomac

Jennifer K. Cosham, 2 November 2007

Great Falls Tavern and Lock 20, facing southeast



Great Falls Tavern, north and west elevations

